

House Republican Press Release

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Rep. Bielawa Urges Prompt Approval of State Funds for Bethel High School Renovation



HARTFORD- State Representative Hank Bielawa, R-2nd, today formally called on members of the Legislature's School Priority List Committee to quickly act on approving state reimbursement funds for Connecticut's school renovation projects. Rep. Bielawa noted that proposed renovations for Bethel High School are included on the state's School Construction Priority List and that while approval of the funds is typically done at the end of each legislative session, there is a serious need to expedite funding for the Bethel project.

In 2004, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges placed Bethel High School on probation due to a variety of facility problems, including an inadequate science lab, code violations, undersized locker rooms and gymnasium facilities. In June 2004, Bethel voters overwhelmingly approved allocating more than \$25 million in municipal funds for high school renovations, with anticipated state reimbursement of \$8.8 million.

The Town of Bethel cannot move forward with the project until the Legislature approves an extensive package that comprises reimbursement of school construction projects throughout the state. After the reimbursement rate is set, projects can then be put out to bid.

"I'm hopeful that making members of the School Priority List Committee aware of the situation Bethel faces will help expedite the approval of the reimbursement funds," said Rep. Bielawa. "Voters in our community spoke clearly last year by giving such overwhelming support to this project and there is a genuine need to move the timeline along as quickly as possible."

Rep. Bielawa added that while visiting Bethel in the fall of 2004, House Speaker James Amann, of Milford, publicly supported approving the reimbursement funds as quickly as possible. Bielawa said he is also now calling upon Speaker Amann to follow through on the supportive comments he made at that time.